

TESOL Member Resolution on Language Rights (1987)

Whereas TESOL is an organization which promotes programs that provide speakers of other languages the opportunity to learn English; and

Whereas TESOL supports the study of other languages for native English speakers; and

Whereas in recognition of the right of all individuals to preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural origins, TESOL also supports learners of English maintaining their native tongues during and after their learning of English; and

Whereas these rights have been affirmed by such international organizations as UNESCO and the European Economic Community and in such international treaties as the Helsinki Accord; and

Whereas several states within the United States of America have enacted and other states and the United States Congress are considering legislative measures that could be used to deny these basic language rights; and

Whereas the considerable resources being spent to promote and implement English-only policies in the United States of America could be allocated more effectively for language instruction, including English as a second language, at all educational levels and within all educational settings;

Therefore Be It Resolved that TESOL support measures that protect the right of all individuals to preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural origins;

Be It Further Resolved that TESOL oppose all measures declaring English the official language of the United States of America or of any legally constituted part thereof; and

Be It Finally Resolved that TESOL circulate this resolution to its affiliates and interest sections, to other professional organizations, and to appropriate public officials, especially those officials in localities where policies counter to the principles established in this resolution are being considered.

We in TESOL strongly believe that this resolution reaffirms the highest ideals and traditions of our profession as teachers of English to speakers of other languages--namely, that all individuals have the opportunity to acquire proficiency in English while maintaining their own language and culture.

1987 TESOL Convention
Miami Beach, Florida USA

Note: This member resolution was voted upon during the annual business meeting of the association in 1987. Resolutions passed at the annual business meetings of the membership are not official policy of the association. The resolutions need a vote of approval by the Board of Directors.